

**QUESTIONS FOR APPOINTEES TO THE GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF CONTROL**

Shelley Padnos

1. What goals would you like to achieve during your time on the board?
2. In your discussions with the governor's office prior to your appointment, what was the general charge given to you?
3. Over the last 15 or 20 years it seems that all state universities have been expanding programs to try to offer everything to everyone. Do you think this is a good idea?
4. There is a proposal to separate funding of the State's three largest universities from the other twelve universities. Should the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University be funded separately?
5. Under what circumstances would you vote to increase tuition at your school?
6. Do you think your university has done a good job of controlling costs? Where would you find additional cost savings?
7. What type of outcomes should the university measure to determine if it is being successful? (i.e. graduation rates, how long it took to graduate, job placement in the graduates major, etc.) Does your university currently do anything like this?
8. What is your position on the importance of state universities as authorizers of charter public schools?
9. What is your opinion of the new constitutional amendment banning the use of race and gender preferences in public university admissions? How will you ensure that the amendment is implemented at your university?
10. In which areas of technological research does your university specialize? How effective is your school at commercializing this research to help grow the state's economy?
11. Do you see postsecondary education as mainly a conduit to the work world or is there intrinsic value to pursuing a higher education?
12. Do you think that K-12 institutions are doing a good job of preparing students for college? Why?

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FOR APPOINTEES TO GVSU BOARD OF  
CONTROL SUBMITTED BY SHELLEY E. PADNOS, April 4, 2007**

1. I hope to become a valued and contributing member of the GVSU Board by bringing to the Board my perspectives as a successful business leader as well as a consumer of both the University's services and its graduates.
2. I have not received any charge (either general or specific) from the Governor's office in connection with this appointment. It was suggested that I read the Cherry Commission Report on Higher Education, which I have done and which I found very helpful and interesting.
3. On its face this would seem to be an easy question to answer, as no one entity can possibly be "everything to everyone"; however, I think that answer ignores the more difficult underlying issue of determining how those decisions are to be made. It is in the State's best interests to have the highest quality educational institutions possible, in order for our State to remain competitive in the "education marketplace". Education, by definition is a constantly changing and dynamic field and it must regularly adapt to the changing needs and demands of society. A University that does not regularly review and change its programs and courses can quickly become of less value to students and to the citizens of the State. Having said that, it does appear to me that GVSU has remained heavily focused on undergraduate education and professional Master's degrees.
4. I have not been successful in finding very much information about the proposal to separate funding for the State's three largest universities, and don't feel qualified to state an opinion at this time.
5. I would vote to increase tuition rates if I were convinced that the budget had been carefully examined in terms of opportunities to cut spending and that without the tuition increases, the quality of our programs and services would suffer. In my discussions with the President and his staff at GVSU I have been assured that the administration's budget committee thoroughly examines the budget each year and recommends line item reductions as a part of the annual budget process. Having said that I am well aware of and a firm believer in the importance of keeping education affordable.

6. I do believe that GVSU has done a good job of controlling costs. For over 30 years, Louis Padnos Iron & Metal Company has provided scholarships to attend a Michigan college or university of their choice, to the children of its employees. For that entire time, the basis of the scholarships has been the tuition rate then being charged by Grand Valley State University. We have always considered the tuition rate charged by GVSU to be an excellent value and although no one likes to see those rates increase, we continue to believe that our Company and our employees' children who attend GVSU receive an excellent education at a fair price. This fact has been independently confirmed by Institutional Research and Evaluation, Inc., which, for the past eleven years in a row, has named GVSU as one of "America's 100 Best College Buys". I will need more experience on the Board and with the budget to have an opinion as to where additional cost savings might be found.
7. It is my understanding that performance issues are measured annually and that the results are shared with and discussed by the GVSU Board. Over the past 5 years, freshman to sophomore retention rates have increased from 78% to 82% and Grand Valley's graduation rates are currently the highest when compared to comparable Michigan universities. Both of these are important measurements that have resulted in increased value to students, parents and to the people of the State of Michigan. Retention rates, graduation rates, and job placement statistics are all important outcomes that should be measured and tracked by universities.
8. GVSU currently charters more than two dozen Charter Schools and the director of that office makes regular reports to the GVSU Board on the status of the schools. I think that State universities have served an important and cost effective function as the authorizers of these schools. In Grand Valley's case, two of the schools that it has chartered are of particular interest. Black River Public School in Holland Michigan is the only Michigan charter public school that will offer K-12 classes and was recently named one of the top 100 public high schools in the United States (and one of only two in Michigan) by Newsweek Magazine in its May 8, 2006 issue. University Preparatory Academy of Detroit, run by Douglas Ross, will graduate its first class this coming June and a number of those graduates have already been accepted to the freshman class at Grand Valley.
9. The voters of the State of Michigan have spoken and Proposal 2 is now the law. I have been assured by the GVSU administration that Proposal 2 has been fully implemented on campus. It is important to note that race and gender had not been used as factors for admission to GVSU, even before the passage of Proposal 2. That said, I strongly believe that a student body that has many different perspectives, based upon a diversity of backgrounds, helps to prepare graduates to succeed in our increasingly global workplace and it is my intention to continue to encourage the administration to maintain diversity as an institutional goal at GVSU.

10. Grand Valley has been the only university in Michigan to be awarded two SmartZone designations by the State. The West Michigan Science and Technology Initiative, located in GVSU's downtown Grand Rapids campus is a business incubator for companies involved in life sciences, with the goal of helping those companies turn their innovations in medical research and technology into commercial products. The Michigan Alternative Energy Center, located in Muskegon is also a business incubator as well as a research and development center for alternative and renewable energy technologies, with the same goal of helping to create marketable commercial products. While both of these ventures are relatively young, each of them has a great potential for helping to grow the State's economy. In addition Grand Valley operates the Lake Michigan Center in Muskegon which focuses on water and water management issues and has become an important resource for the preservation of the Great Lakes and surrounding waterways.
11. I do not think that the question can be answered as an "either, or". I believe that in today's economy a postsecondary education is a conduit to the work world and I also believe that there is a difficult to quantify intrinsic value to higher education. That intrinsic value manifests itself in a person's quality of life, satisfaction, and overall happiness. It also results in students becoming "lifelong learners" which Tom Friedman (in *The World is Flat*) has argued is an essential skill for economic survival in a global economy. I am aware that GVSU seeks to advise incoming freshman of the employment opportunities that are associated with particular fields of study so that they are better able to make informed decisions about courses of study. In the final analysis, however, students must be free to make their own choices.
12. The Cherry Commission Report on Higher Education reported that "only 30% of students who graduate from high school have taken a course of study rigorous enough to prepare them for postsecondary education." And further, that only 37% of 18 to 24 year olds were enrolled in institutions of higher learning. Assuming that those statistics are correct, I think that one would have to conclude that we are not doing a good enough job of preparing students for college, and implementation of the suggestions contained in that report could result in substantial improvements in K-12 institutions.